

THE DRAMATIC CENSOR;

OR,

WEEKLY THEATRICAL REPORT.

NUMBER V. Saturday, February 1, 1800.

Vejanius, armis

Herculis ad postem fixis, latet abditus agro,

Ne populum extrema toties exoret arena.

. Dramatic Writers, who desire to have an *early* Review of their Publications, are requested to send a copy to the Editor, at the Printing-Office,

DRURY-LANE, Friday, January 24, 1800.

PIZARRO. (*Sheridan.*) SHIPWRECK. (*S. Arnold.*)

WE are happy to perceive, that Mr. SHERIDAN is not impenetrable to conviction, nor too much elated with self-conceit, to be inaccessible to the remonstrances of intelligent criticism. The effeminacy of *Alonzo's* dress, on which topic we took occasion to animadvert with becoming freedom in the First Number of The DRAMATIC CENSOR, has very properly attracted his corrective notice; and that chief now makes his appearance in a habit equally superb, but more congenial

Y

nial to the character of a * *warrior*. This judicious alteration will, we trust, prove the precursor of further improvements, for which, it must be confessed, there is ample room. Propriety should never be sacrificed to senseless parade, and a childish passion for finery.

Among the whole groupe of *Virgins of the Sun* Miss DE CAMP is the only individual, who appears to take the smallest interest in the religious rites, at which she assists. There is a certain air of feeling and devotion in her look and manner, which strictly accords with the solemnity of the inauguration scene in the second Act.

COVENT-GARDEN, *Friday, January 24, 1800.*

JOANNA. (*Cumberland.*) VOLCANO.

HAVING fully detailed the plot and business of the new play in our third and fourth Number, we now enter upon a *critical* investigation of its merits and

* The Editor of THE DRAMATIC CENSOR in a Note to his Translation of *Pizarro*, published previous to the printed edition of Mr. SHERIDAN's play, pointed out the flagrant absurdity of *Alonzo's* original habit in terms of merited reproach and ridicule. Impartial alike in his censure and his praise, he now with equal alacrity steps forward to testify his approbation of the change which has taken place in *Alonzo's* equipment. It will ever afford him greater pleasure to applaud, where justice warrants the indulgence of his natural inclination, than to condemn.

and pretensions, in which we mean to embrace every collateral circumstance connected with its production.

That *Joanna* owes her presentation on the English Stage to the unprecedented success of *Pizarro*, is a fact too apparent to stand in need of corroborative proof. Independent of *identity* of source, with respect to the original author; independent of *pantomimical* resemblance in the scenic department; the combats, processions, &c.; independent of servile imitation, or rather plagiarism, in the political allusions, which Mr. CUMBERLAND has not been able to introduce, without the most glaring *anachronisms*; independent of all these several coincidences, there is even an obvious and *studied* similarity of *name* between the heroes of the two pieces. *Lazarra* is, both in character and appellation, the avowed rival and intended counter-part of Mr. SHERIDAN'S *Pizarro*. To such wretched arts is plodding cunning obliged to stoop, in its feeble attempts to cope with genius and superior powers of mind.

In reviewing, therefore, the pretensions of *Joanna*, we shall frequently have occasion to consider the New play in its *relative* light, with reference to *Pizarro*. There are many cases, in which the same turn of sentiment, the same train of incident, though conceived with equal felicity, may delight in an *original*, but lose all charm and attraction in a *copy*. The contrast becomes still more glaring and revolting, when the *imitation* falls totally short of the *model*;—when through

its incompetency it exhibits a *burlesque* and *caricature* of the excellence it professes to rival.

Ere we enter upon our promised strictures, it may not be inexpedient to notice the attempt made by one of our diurnal prints (*The Times*) to cloak *superficial reasoning* under the affectation of candour and expanded liberality. In the Report of the New Play given in that paper on the 17th. instant, it is very *sagaciously* remarked, that because the author, forsooth, has thought proper to baptize his adopted bantling by the title of a *Dramatic Romance*, it follows, therefore, as a matter of course, that his production may set *criticism* at defiance, and claim the right of exemption from its jurisdiction. If the validity of this plea be admitted, a writer for the Stage has an easy method of compromising his *incapacity* and his *avarice*. By the capricious exercise of his dramatic *sponsorship*, he may arrogate to himself the privilege of violating taste and propriety with giddy temerity, and reckless impunity. The establishment of such a system, such a code, and canon of critical legislation we shall ever resist with determined hostility. On this principle, an author might multiply absurdity on absurdity with all the wantonness of *conceited ignorance*, and yet hope to escape censure, by giving his production a title correspondent to its contents. “ I plead guilty (he might say) “ to nonsense and to folly; but the very act of confession absolves me from criminality, remits my punishment

“ punishment, and relieves me even from the shame,
 “ reproach, and ignominy, attached in the regular
 “ course of judicature to my offence.” This mode
 of reasoning we never shall sanction with the weight
 of our authority ; but rather, on the other hand, beg
 leave to apply, in an inverted sense, the well-known
 adage ;

“ *Call a rose by any other name, 'twill smell as sweet.*”

Bereft of an opportunity of comparing Mr. CUMBERLAND'S performance with the original play, as written, (but not *published*) by Kotzebue, we are in possession of no criterion to ascertain the individual merits of the German and English author. Mr. CUMBERLAND, indeed, informs us in the prologue, that he has borrowed nothing but the *Plot* :

—————“ for, save the *Plot* alone,

“ The work from top to bottom's all our *own*.

and gives us farther to understand, that to reconcile this plot with the laws and usages of dramatic composition has cost him more pains and trouble, than the production of an original piece from his own creative brain :

“ All who can judge our labour, must confess,

“ *Originality* had made it *less*.”

Unhappily we have no *data*, on which to found our judgment. But taking Mr. CUMBERLAND'S assertion on trust, as a gentleman who does not esteem *honour a word that ought to be expunged from the theatrical vocabulary*, we must confess the managers of
 Covent-

Covent Garden have been guilty of a very wanton and extravagant waste of money in paying the sum of 350 guineas to Kotzebue for the web of a plot, which might be obtained, even by a person unconnected with the theatres, at the trifling expence of the admission to the *One Shilling Gallery*, to witness the representation of *Blue Beard*, *Loaoiska*, or any other similar performance. All that we have been able to discover in this *dearly-purchased* plot is the old story of one man falling in love with the wife of another. The usual *pantomimical* appendages of storming of castles, marches, combats, and processions complete the fable.

Yet stale, and barren withall, as is this self-same vaunted plot, it does not even possess the common merit of developement. *Lazarra* is represented as burning with unlawful passion for *Joanna*; but we are not told how they became acquainted, what opportunities the knight enjoyed of feeding his amorous flame; and what degree of intimacy subsisted between the parties to justify the language in which he reproaches the husband of *Joanna*: “*You dared to marry a lady, who by the laws of chivalry was mine.*” This accusation presupposes a prior engagement between *Lazarra* and the lady, the violation of which originated in the circumventing arts of *Albert*. We might easily adduce a variety of similar instances, where the fable appears imperfect and unconnected; but

but the plot is, from first to last, too contemptible to merit the animadversion of elaborate criticism.

Probably Mr. CUMBERLAND may hope to shift the odium of these defects from his own shoulders upon Kotzebue, as the original author of the play; but this plea we never can admit as an apology for the want of care and skilful management, on the part of the English adapter of a foreign play. It was Mr. CUMBERLAND's duty to supply the deficiencies of the original. A *dresser* of German Dramas must not feed himself with the hope of engrossing all the *reputation* of his work, without coming in for a share of the *disgrace*. On this subject we would beg leave to call Mr. CUMBERLAND's serious attention to the remarks we made on Mrs. INCHBALD's late Comedy, in the Fourth Canto of the satirical poem, entitled *The Wise Man of the East; or, The Apparition of Zoroaster*, &c. They will be found to apply to all our *manufacturers* of German plays.

- " As your's the expected *profit*, your's the *fame*,
- " Be yours the *censure*, likewise, your's the *shame*.
- " If, or your need consulting, or your ease,
- " You choose to fatten on another's lees,
- " Take sweet and sour alike, nor deem it hard
- " To share the various fortunes of your bard.
- " For be this truth to all play-mongers known,
- " Whatever they *adopt*, becomes their *own*."

Waving, however, all farther discussion of the Plot, we now proceed to an investigation of the principal

cipal *characters* in Mr. CUMBERLAND's *Joanna*.— 'Tis in the justness of characteristic delineation, as we remarked in page 76 of our Third Number, that the chief excellence of dramatic writing consists. And here Mr. CUMBERLAND has no excuse to plead for failure and mis-management, as this part of the play, according to his express vaunt, emanates entirely from his own conceptive powers.

To begin then, as gallantry requires, with the fair sex, it was evidently the author's design to exhibit, in the person of *Joanna*, a pattern of female excellence. With such views it was incumbent upon him to *exalt* the character of his heroine, by placing her in situations, where virtue is exposed to the *fiery ordeal* of temptation ; situations where duty combats inclination, but finally proves triumphant. But this the author has not even attempted ; *Joanna* has no inward struggles to encounter ; her heart and duty go together.—Attached to her legal Lord by the tie of affection, and detesting the person of his rival, who possesses no qualities to recommend him, it surely deserves not to be regarded as a marvellous effort of virtue, that she does not run into the arms of the man she hates, and court the addresses of a ruffian, whose brutal manners are calculated to inspire abhorrence rather than love. The lady's goodness is entirely of the *negative* kind. She mounts the *tragic stilts* without occasion ; proclaims her heroic intention of stabbing herself,

herself, to *escape* personal violence, before it is *offered*; and seems to rest her claim to admiration and applause on no other ground, than the merit of *premature* suicide, for which *Lazarra's* demeanour at the time furnishes no adequate apology. This line of conduct affords an illustration of what is generally meant by the homely phrase of "*being outrageously virtuous.*"

Lord *Albert* is a weak, shallow-pated mortal, capable indeed of acts of generosity, but totally void, on trying occasions, of magnanimity, and mental strength. In the scene where his castle is attacked by *Lazarra*, he behaves himself like a *chicken-hearted* poltroon. Solely intent upon consulting his own safety, he very gallantly takes to his heels, the moment the assailants make their appearance, leaving his dearly-beloved wife and child, for whom he professes so much attachment and solicitude, to shift for themselves.

Lazarra, as we have already taken occasion to remark, is a brutal ruffian, with not one feature to engage the favourable notice of the sex. His passion for *Joanna* may justly be denominated *Utopian*. It does not appear, that he ever had reason to flatter himself with possessing an interest in that lady's affections. On the contrary, we are expressly told, that even in his own trade of fighting, he was twice vanquished in the lists by *Albert*; and

we know too well the predilection of the sex for a man of valour and military renown, to suppose his repeated discomfiture could operate as a recommendation of his suit in the eyes of *Joanna*. Yet with all these disadvantages, he engages in the mad scheme of forcing her inclinations, and sets out on a wild-goose chase from Italy to Switzerland, where he enters into a league with the Captain of a gang of banditti, composed of the outcasts of all nations. —But how this motley troop first came into these parts; whether *Lazarra* brought them with him for the express purpose of accomplishing his designs, or found them ready to his hand; as likewise, by what means he became acquainted with their existence, whether prior or subsequent to his departure from Italy, of this the author does not vouchsafe to give us the slightest hint. Probably this omission is intended as a compliment to the reader's sagacity. There are certain writers who conceive it an insult to explain themselves, and, therefore, very kindly leave employment for the imagination of others, to reconcile the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies they commit.

Wolf is the most prominent, but at the same time the most faulty character in the whole play. Alternately ferocious and humane; blunt and jesuitical; ignorant and witty, he blends feeling with brutality, sentiment with buffoonery, and appears a kind of *middle-thing* between a savage and a civilized

lized being. His manners are alternately those of a *bully* and a *soldier*; a *beefor* and a *poltroon*. In one word, he is a compound of contradictions, a mass of heterogeneous qualities, which never yet met together and assimilated in the same person.

Darbeny is brought forward merely for the purpose of introducing a few musical airs, alike distinguished for depth of science, and difficulty of execution. Songs of this description, it must be confessed, come with a peculiar grace from the lips of a common cut-throat, and leader of a band of outlaws.

The only individuals in the *Dramatis Personæ* who sustain appropriate parts, are *Wenzel*, *Philip*, and *Eloisa*. These characters are drawn with truth and fidelity. To this small list we might, perhaps, add the *Old Hermit*, or *Theodore*, the banished Lord of *Thurn*, as he afterwards reveals himself.

Guntram, like his opponent *Wolf*, is a perfect caricature. In *farce*, he might, haply, be tolerated, but ought to be proscribed from legitimate drama.

Eugene, the page, originally personated by Miss WATERS, has not made his appearance since the first night of representation. Considered solely in reference to itself, we highly approve of the omission; as the part stood totally detached, and unconnected with

with the general interest of the piece. But we cannot give Mr. CUMBERLAND credit for an alteration, which (at the same time, that it deserves to rank as an improvement) evinces the writer's ignorance of propriety in the first instance. 'Tis less to the author's own good sense, than to the effect produced upon the audience, that such changes are to be ascribed. A skilful dramatist would never attempt to *lug-in* his characters, without incorporating them with the plot.

In thus amply and distinctly stating the several defects of Mr. CUMBERLAND's production, we have strictly adhered to the plan we originally laid down for our invariable rule of conduct, viz.—not to pass an indiscriminate vote of censure or applause, but to advance proof and argument in support of our opinion. We have now nearly exhausted the subject, as far as Mr. CUMBERLAND's literary character is involved; and from an impartial review of the whole, we feel no hesitation in declaring, in terms unequivocally strong and explicit, that *Joanna* is a performance calculated to tarnish, instead of increasing the author's reputation. A writer of very moderate talents might produce a better drama in the space of a week. Divest it of the adventitious aid it receives from the sister-arts of Music and Painting; strip it of its borrowed charms, its scenic attractions, its dresses and decorations, its marches and processions, with the whole *et cetera* of pantomimic

mimic lure, and this grand *Dramatic Romance* will be found to exhibit an incongruous mass of ill-digested matter, which dares not meet the public eye in its native state of deformity.

The only apology that can possibly be offered, on behalf of Mr. CUMBERLAND, for the voluntary disgrace he has intailed upon his literary character, forms in itself a fresh subject of impeachment against him. Authors should be aware, that there is a season, when prudence warns them to retire from the field. It would have been to Mr. CUMBERLAND'S advantage, had he duly attended to the *motto* we have prefixed to our present Number. He appears to stand woefully in need of a friendly monitor.

———— *crebro qui personet aurem :*

Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne

Peccet ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat.

When an author has so long maintained a fair character in the Republic of Letters, it may well excite indignation to see him degrade himself in his old age to the level of the common herd of dramatic scriblers, and stoop to act the part of an underling in the getting-up of a *Pantomime*!

We

We have already sufficiently animadverted on the *Music and Scenery to render all further comment superfluous, except briefly to notice that the *fighting-scenes*, though considerably abridged, still continues to be conducted on a principle which destroys the illusion, and produces a farcical effect. It
conveys

* We cannot suffer this opportunity to pass, without exposing a flagrant instance of that habitude of misrepresentation, for which the self-dubbed *Oracle* is so justly notorious. In one of the wretched attempts at wit, which the Editor of that paper labours with so much unsuccessful pain to bring forth, we meet with a pretended *bon-mot* by Mr. BANNISTER, respecting the Music to *Joanna*. “An ill-natured Critic (probably the Editor himself) found fault (we are told) with the uniform gravity of the Music. My good fellow, observes JACK BANNISTER, you forget the Music is expressly advertised as being *appropriate*.”—Now we, who make it a point to watch, as far as it is practicable for human foresight, every occurrence in the Theatre, happened to sit contiguous to the gentleman, whose witticisms are here quoted in reprobation of Mr. BUSBY’s Music. And we have authority for declaring, that Mr. BANNISTER never manifested the slightest symptoms of censure; on the contrary, his approbation of Mr. BUSBY’s performance was loudly and decidedly expressed. It further is deserving of notice, that the Editor of this self-same *Oracle*, in his Report of the New Play, gave a wrong quotation of MUNDEN’s speech in his description of the Swiss mountains, where “nothing grows but icicles, and (not of, as the ORACLE pretends) liberty”—and then affected to criticize the blunder he himself had so wantonly committed. We would advise the Editor in future to be more careful in *spunging his ears*, before he presumes to quote passages from a New Play.

conveys a very faint and inadequate idea of a battle to see half a dozen combatants parrying each other's blows upon the stage. An image of such vast compass does not admit of being embodied by scenic representation. Combats should be thrown into the back-ground, where gloom abets the fiction and leaves free scope to the imagination.

With respect to the merits of the performers, the first tribute of commendation is incontrovertibly due to Mr. H. JOHNSTONE. His delineation of the amiable character of *Philip*, especially in the Third Act, where the agonizing conflict takes place between love and duty, was just, animated, and highly empassioned. We never have seen him appear to greater advantage.

HOLMAN, as *Lazarra*, is *vox, et præterea nihil*; in plain English, *Rant* supplies the place of every other professional qualification. His strut is on a *par* with his delivery.

Mr. POPE's part, as Lord *Albert*, has been transferred to Mr. CLAREMONT. Insignificant in itself, it is of very little consequence who performs the character. The one is distinguished by his *whine*, the other by his *frown*.

Mr. MURRAY recited the **Prologue* in a manner,
which

* The two concluding lines of the Prologue afford a striking instance of the triumph of *sound* over *sense*. By *pointedly* alluding

which rendered it difficult to ascertain, whether he spoke in *prose* or *verse*. He was more successful as the *Hermit*, though the part is certainly *beneath* him, and with the exception of the scene, where he adjures *Philip* to fly to the rescue of *Eloisa*, and his subsequent recognition of his daughter, ill calculated to display to advantage the great powers he avowedly possesses.

Mr. MUNDEN, in the *unnatural* character of *Wolf*, may claim some indulgence for overstepping the modesty of Nature? But he has no excuse to plead for a *wanton breach of decorum*, which, as it argues a *sovereign contempt for the audience*, we cannot pass over, without merited reprimand and censure. We allude to a certain practice, technically

ing to the favourite, and well-founded partiality of Englishmen to their naval superiority, tautology and want of meaning obtain all the credit of superlative wit, and *sharply-pointed* humour.

“ If *knotted oaks* will bend to her (*Music's*) appeal,

“ Need she despair, that *Hearts of Oak* will feel?”

What is this, when brought to the test and touchstone of common sense, but repetition and senseless jargon? The writer, in fact, might with equal propriety have asked: “ Need we despair, that the *heart* of an oak will be as susceptible as any other part of the tree?” How easily might the *antithesis* have been rendered perfect, by more closely adhering to the text of the author, from whose works the allusion is borrowed!

“ If *soften'd rocks* confess the strong appeal,

“ Need she despair, that *Hearts of Oak* will feel?”

nically denominated "quizzing" in which he is too apt to indulge. We frequently caught him *teering* at his brother-actors, and endeavouring to put them out of countenance. We would caution the performers to be more upon their guard in this respect, as they may rest assured, that their motions are strictly watched, and will be denounced, whenever they violate propriety and decorum.

Mr. INCLEDON, as a singer, need only to be named. His martial *Solo* "To arms! to arms! to arms! &c." was given with spirit; and the tender air in which he addresses *Eloisa* in the Third Act: "In Spring's sweet prime, &c." was equally distinguished by sweetness and richness of modulation. We have in our former Number apprized him of a *verbal* inaccuracy he commits at the close of the second stanza.

Mr. EMERY gave a correct and spirited delineation of *Guntram*. The character was in every respect well-supported.

The unsophisticated simplicity of *Eloisa* is pleasing and interesting. Mrs. H. JOHNSTONE sustained the part with much *naïveté* and feeling.

Mrs. POPE's *Joanna* was distinguished by the characteristic defects of that performer. Nature and dignity are alike foreign to this lady's style of acting, except in the eyes of those, who mistake affectation for grace, and violence for sensibility. Her voice is likewise very unequal, and falls by abrupt transition from a high to a low and discordant

key. She is totally destitute of judgment, and though the avowed *child of Art*, possesses not sufficient powers of discrimination, to employ even art to advantage.

DRURY-LANE, *Saturday, Jan. 25, 1800.*

ADELAIDE. (*J. Pye.*)—FIRST FLOOR. (*Cobb.*)

THE matchless powers of the *Laureat* were this night called into action to charm, astonish, and captivate the town. Treading the path, but, alas!

haud passibus æquis,

which the immortal SHAKESPEARE trod before, Mr. PYE presented the public with an Historical Play, *yclep'd a Tragedy* (it is absolutely necessary to notice the title, after the example of the primitive founders of the Art of Painting, who, to prevent mistake, wrote the subject of their labours at the bottom of their performance—"this is a house!" and "that is a horse!") founded on the events of the latter part of the reign of the Second Henry. Ever duly mindful of his *official* character, as well when he composes a *Carmen Seculare*, to settle the controversy relative to the *Nineteenth *Century*; or
writes

* Mr. PYE in his preface expressly observes: "The controversy about the Nineteenth Century, which has lately so much occupied the public mind, being of consequence to *me*, who am *officially* called on to give a public opinion on it, I very early
turned

writes a play to restore the true *Shakespearian* drama; he appears to have been actuated in the present production by the pious design of *reviving the age of chivalry*, the departure of which was so pathetically lamented by his late friend, Mr. BURKE. Or probably, he meant to read a *lecture* (for *Adelaide* avowedly partakes more of the nature of a sermon than a play) to the Chiefs of the Coalition, on the evils concomitant on jealousy and disunion. Be this, however, as it may, we disclaim all interference with his *political* views, and shall only investigate the pretensions of his Tragedy in its *dramatic* capacity.

The * *Prologue*, which considered as a poetical composition, possesses more than ordinary merit,
prepared

turned my thoughts to the subject, and *soon* adopted the notion *most generally received*." (The *Laureat*, we find, deems it *most* prudent to *swim with the tide*.)

* Mr. SOTHEY, a name well known in the literary world, is we understand, the author of this Prologue. Its poetical claims we readily allow, but are sorry to be under the necessity of adding, that it is not only *inappropriate* to the play it ushers in (as raising an expectation of scenes, which do not occur) but is obnoxious to criticism, on the score of *moral absurdity*. Independant of the obtrusion of politics on public amusements, which will ever meet our decided reprobation, we must condemn the sanction which the writer appears to give to the spirit of fanaticism, which in darker ages drained Europe of its choicest,

prepared us for scenes of horror and affright. *Wied Sisters! howling spectres! tortur'd ghosts!* and the
Goddeſs

est blood and treasure, and deluged the plains of Asia with slaughter and butchery of the human race, by setting on foot the mad system of *crusades*. And who can restrain a smile, when he sees *religion* pressed into the service, and the professors of that very faith, the overthrow of which was the chief object of the *crusade-adventurers*, joined in panegyric with the *ſoi-diſant* true believers, for vindicating the worship of the living God. There is a curious assimilation of contrarities in the close of this Prologue which seems to be intended as a comment upon Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. VI. v. 15. *The Croſs and the Crescent! Allah and Jehovah!* with the redoubted *Christian Knight* in the rear! form a very paradoxical parallel.

We again repeat, that our criticism is not directed against the literary talents of Mr. SOTHEY. His are the "words that breathe, and thoughts that burn." The Epilogue cannot be placed in competition: 'tis brass opposed to gold, tinsel contrasted with silver. The one evinces native powers of mind, and a rich poetic vein; the other discovers merely a tolerable knack of rhyming, and a mechanical knowledge of theatrical *common-place*. That our readers may have an opportunity of deciding on the justice of our verdict, we subjoin a copy of both performances:

PROLOGUE.

OH thou! around whose throne in awful state
 By fear and pity rang'd, the passions wait;
 At whose commanding call th' Historic Muse
 Lifts the bright pageant of her passing views,
 And on the column of recording time
 Paints sculptur'd groupes of Virtue, Woe, and Crime!

Tame

Goddeſs of Revenge ! are ſo ſucceſſfully bandied about,
that we anticipated more than *mortal* agony and
diſtreſs ;

Tamer of Man ! beneath whoſe boundleſs reign
Wild fancy ſhapes her viſionary train,
Embodies airy beings, all her own,
And rules with Wizard-wand the world unknown ;
Leagues the weird ſiſters, where the night ſtorm raves,
Drags howling ſpectres from reluctant graves,
From realms of tortur'd ſpirits liſts the veil,
And half reveals the unutterable tale !

Muſe ! while thy forceful ſtrokes at will controul,
Or tender touches humanize the ſoul !
Send Terror forth, the vengeful goddeſs guide,
Tame the mad inſolence of earthly pride ;
Each dire viciffitude of life reveal,
Till trembling tyrants fear what wretches feel.
Send Pity forth, and while her 'ſuaſive power
Allures to woe th' ſadly pleaſing hour,
To cold proſperity's ſtrange gaze expoſe
The painful image of unnotic'd woes ;
Nurſe the ſoft ſenſe that man to man endears,
And ſoothes the ſuff'rer in the vale of tears !

Fixt on this baſe our Poet reſts his claim,
And woos { *The Audience.* } the voice of fame,
 { in your applauſe }
On Engliſh annals builds Hiſtoric rhymes,
And calls the ſpirit forth of Feudal Times ;
Such as of old to Syria's diſtant coaſt
Led *lion-hearted* Richard's Chriſtian Hoſt,
When Britain's King the Red Croſs flag unfurl'd,
And darken'd in its ſhade the pagan world ;
Such as of late, in Heaven's appointed hour,
Gaul's vaunted idol drove from Acre's tower,

When

distress ; and were very naturally led to conclude,
that the dread beings of the “ world unknown ”
would

When *Cross* and *Crescent*, in just league combin'd
Smote in his pride the murd'rer of mankind.
While Albion's naval hero, foremost trod,
Scatter'd the host that scorn'd the living God ;
And Asia, rescued from th' oppressor's might,
Hail'd *Alla's* name, and crown'd the *Christian Knight* !!!

EPILOGUE.

What an odd creature was this Gallic Maid,
To seek a Cloister's melancholy shade,
Whilst a young ardent lover high in arms
Submissive bow'd before her conqu'ring charms ?
Grant, that the father would supplant the son,
The double victory by her graces won,
Should but have fir'd the nymph to keep the field,
In the proud hope, a thousand more might yield !
Beauty should gain new laurels every day,
And nobly aim at universal sway.
Besides, to give some glory to the thing,
Her venerable victim was a King—
And then how vast the triumph to ensnare
The fam'd gallant of Rosamond the fair.
Unhappy Rosamond, whose piteous fate,
Love with a sigh, for ever shall relate !

But to our play—the heroine's case is hard,
So oft to Wedlock near—so oft debarr'd ;
And then that meddling Priest to interfere,
When youthful passions urg'd their fond career,

Bid

would assist in disclosing the “ unutterable tale.” But we were soon relieved from our apprehensions, for from the first drawing up of the curtain, till its final fall, we could not discover one single flight of fancy, one solitary scene of woe to “ rend and harrow up the soul !” ’Twas a *fast sermon* in *deca syllabic* verse, transferred from the *pulpit* to the *stage*. ’Twas the *Anniversary of king Charles’s Martyrdom*, celebrated four days in advance. To destroy as much as possible the illusion of scenic representation, and enhance the *gravity* of the discourse, it was
very

Bid the poor swain to Palestine depart,
That he might lose his *head*, as well as *heart*.
Why, if the man had known his place aright,
He would not *seperate* lovers, but *unite*:
His duty was to *join* love’s gentle elves,
And as to *parting*—leave it to themselves:
Or, if there needs another’s help, at least,
’Tis bus’ness for the *Lawyer*, not the *Priest*.
Nay, had this Legate paus’d a week or so,
The spouse might then have been content to go,
And rather rush amid the martial strife,
Than wage close warfare with a wrangling wife.
Well, woman must be strangely chang’d, I vow,
No Girls from *Lovers* fly to *Convents* now,
None here will hide in dismal dens from man,
But range the world, and conquer all they can.
Now to our bard—the man pretends to say
There’s more of *truth* than *fiction* in his play;
If so, from him avert all hostile aim,
And e’en let gossip history bear the blame.

very judiciously contrived, that with few exceptions (chiefly when the rival princes with their adherents, assemble round the body of the dead king) never more than two persons were allowed to appear at one and the same time upon the stage. Incident was very properly proscribed *in toto*: of course, we are relieved from a detail of the plot. The author of the *Epilogue* stands therefore perfectly justified in asserting, that :

“ There’s more of *truth* than *fiction* in the play.”

Accordingly nothing more is necessary than to observe, that *Richard* is contracted to *Adelaide*, but having previously pledged his vow to join the standard of the *Red Cross*, his nuptials are interdicted by the Court of Rome. This circumstance *John* avails himself of, to render *Richard* jealous of his father, and secretly abets the Papal interdiction, in hopes that *Richard* will fall in the plains of Palestine and thus leave the immediate reversion of England’s crown to himself. All parties, young *Clifford* excepted, are easy dupes to his perfidy. *Richard* quarrels with *Adelaide*, because she will not sanction his revolt against his father; the lady in revenge shuts herself up in a convent. *John*, under pretence of reclaiming his elder brother to allegiance, joins the rebels, and the *Old King*, on receiving the intelligence dies of a broken heart.

Dull, however, and soporific, as is the uniform tenor of Mr. Pyl’s tragedy :

“ No tears are seen, no sighs convulse the breast,

“ But opiate dullness lulls the soul to rest !”

’twere

'twere well for the author's literary character, if *insipidity* constituted its sole defect. From the *official* pen of the *Laureat*, we certainly had a right to look for correctness of style, and chasteness of expression. Yet even in this respect, when weighed in the balance of impartial justice, our poet is found wanting. It is not our design to multiply quotation upon quotation, nor to expose error in aggravated colours. A few instances, therefore, will suffice to justify our assertion.

Richard, on being apprized of the Legates intention to thwart his nuptials, declares his determination to defy the papal authority, and "try if (*whether*) Rome has insolence" enough to dare his wrath.

Adelaide addresses her passionate lover :

" Oh ! Richard ! Richard ! "

" Hast thou forgot (*forgotten*) the tears of penitence ? "

In another place she desires him to look to the trophies of many a bloody field ;

" where your arm turn'd

" The scale of conquest, and tell if (*whether*)

Clifford, after disclosing to *Henry* the perfidy of his favourite son, *John*, remonstrates with the king on his austerity towards *Richard* :

" Ask yourself

" If (*whether*) he has not been injured ? "

Richard, in reply to the *Abbess's* demand : who he is ? and for what purpose he dares invade the sanctuary of a convent ?—avows himself :

" Richard of England, who comes here (*hither*)

The champion, &c."

B b

And

And in the same breath, by a bold poetical figure (*Richard*, we understand, was as famous in his age for a turn for poetry, as the *Laureat* of the present day) he swears:

“ These walls shall *feel* my fury !”

The *Legate*, to add greater weight to his menaces, has recourse to tautology, and warns his hearers to beware of

———“ The arm of *Vengeance*, now prepar’d

“ To strike the blow *vindictive*.”

But we forbear, from *motives of delicacy*, to expatiate on this unwelcome subject ; and shall therefore proceed to a review of the *characters*, as delineations of *Nature*, in the first place, and secondly, as connected with *historic evidence*. As a necessary preliminary, we shall prefix to our remarks a list of the

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King Henry,	- - - - -	Mr. AICKIN.
Prince Richard,	- - - - -	Mr. KEMBLE.
Prince John,	- - - - -	Mr. BARRYMORE.
Clifford, <i>natural son to King</i>	} -	Mr. C. KEMBLE.
Henry, <i>by Rosamond,</i>		
Legate,	- - - - -	Mr. CORY.
Attendant,	- - - - -	Mr. MADDOCKS,
Adelaide,	- - - - -	Mrs. SIDDONS.
Emma,	- - - - -	Miss HEARD.
Abbess,	- - - - -	Mrs. COATES.

The *Times*, with that *consummate sagacity*, which has long rendered that paper “ conspicuous above its fellows”—particularly extols the *New Tragedy* for

for its strict attention to the character, which History has handed down to us of the several personages, who figure in the *Laureat's* play: "The characters (it observes) are drawn with a sufficient degree of discrimination, to preserve the distinct ideas of each, which we have received from History." Now this assertion, it unfortunately happens, we must beg leave to call in question.

To begin then with *Richard*, as the most prominent character in the Play, History has represented him as a bold, intrepid, manly Prince, whose ruling passion was glory, who sacrificed every consideration to ambition and an insatiable thirst of military renown. Yet Mr. PVE, no doubt "for reasons good," has thought proper to make a *distaff-bero* of *Richard*, *Coeur de Lion*, and depicts this Prince as willing to barter glory against a "month's enjoyment of *Adelaide's* charms."—*Richard* is, likewise, too much of an *egotist*, and brags of his own prowess and exploits in the style of a common bully. He is likewise too easily duped by the clumsy artifices of his brother.

Prince John exhibits another outrage of correct historic delineation. His villainy, though ill-digested, and ill-disguised, does not betray that imbecility of mind, that want of tone and nerve, which History has laid to his charge. We perceive no traces of that bigotted zeal, that blind fanaticism, which formed a leading *trait* in his character.

King

King Henry himself is made to die a sudden death; whereas History informs us that he fell a victim to the lingering disease of a broken heart, brought on by the shock his parental fondness experienced, when he found the name of his favourite son *John* enrolled among the list of Barons, who had revolted against him.

Clifford is, perhaps, the most defensible character in the whole list of *Dramatis Personæ*, though the Editor of the *Times*, with his wonted discernment, has discovered, that History is totally silent, as to any "issue which *Henry* had by *Rosamond*." 'Tis a great pity, that *News-paper-critics* will not take the trouble of consulting History, before they venture to commit themselves in such a rash and unguarded manner. *Hume* would have informed them that *Henry* had two natural sons by *Rosamond*, one of whom espoused the daughter of the Earl of Salisbury; the other was promoted to the Archbishoprick of York.

Adelaide is a kind of dramatic *non-descript*, half *Truth*, half *Fiction*. The name of the Spanish Princess, to whom *Richard* was contracted, was *Alice*; but History does not paint her in the amiable light, that the *Laureat* has done. Neither does it appear that *Richard* was so passionately devoted to her, as he is represented to be in Mr. *PYE*'s tragedy.

Want of room prevents us from entering so deeply as we could wish into our critical researches. But should the play *linger out* another week, we
may

may probably resume the enquiry, and analyze this extraordinary production of the *learned, ingenious, and respectable Poet Laureat* (as he is expressly stiled in the *True Briton*) with a minuter degree of care and attention.

With respect to the performers, there is very little latitude for criticism; not from a want of talents, on their part; but from the circumscribed opportunity the author has afforded them of displaying their powers. KEMBLE scarcely ever appeared to less advantage. Mrs. SIDDONS was devoid of interest; *Emma* was a mere dangler on *Adelaide*; BARRYMORE and AICKIN had very inferior parts. *Young Clifford* was the best character in the Play, and was not unably sustained by Mr. C. KEMBLE.

It is but justice to add, that for a first night, the performers, with the exception of Mr. BARRYMORE, were very perfect in their respective parts. Mr. C. KEMBLE spoke the *Prologue*; and Miss MELLON delivered the *Epilogue* with humour and address.

COVENT-GARDEN, *Saturday, Jan. 25, 1800.*

JOANNA. (*Cumberland.*)—VOLCANO.

FAMILY distresses (the loss of an amiable wife) preventing Mr. INCLEDON from appearing in public, the part of *Darbony* was assigned to Mr. HILL. In cases of this nature, when a performer undertakes a character merely *pro tempore*, affording his assistance

ance

ance from *necessity*, not *choice*, it would be an invidious task to draw a comparison between the original representative, and his substitute. We shall therefore only observe, with respect to Mr. HILL's general style of singing, that his manner betrays too much *effort* and *organic labour*.

DRURY-LANE, *Monday, Jan. 27, 1800.*

ADELAIDE. (*J. Pye.*)—LODOISKA. (*Kemble.*)

Mr. BARRYMORE was more imperfect in his part, than on the first night of representation.—When he attempted to announce the Play for repetition, a violent opposition arose, which lasted upwards of a quarter of an hour, before he was permitted to speak.

COVENT-GARDEN, *Monday, Jan. 27, 1800.*

JOANNA. (*Cumberland.*)—VOLCANO.

DRURY-LANE, *Tuesday, Jan. 28, 1800.*

PIZARRO. (*Sheridan.*)—NO SONG, NO SUPPER.
(*P. Hoare.*)

COVENT-GARDEN, *Tuesday, Jan. 28, 1800.*

JOANNA. (*Cumberland.*)—VOLCANO.

DRURY-LANE, *Wednesday, Jan. 29, 1800.*

ADELAIDE. (*J. Pye.*)—LODOISKA. (*J. P. Kemble.*)

COVENT

COVENT-GARDEN, *Wednesday, Jan. 29, 1800.*

THE WEST-INDIAN. (*Cumberland.*)—PEEPING-TOM. (*Colman.*)

THIS Comedy abounds in chaste humour, refined sentiment, and practical knowledge of the human heart; but the dialogue is unhappily disgraced by grammatical inaccuracies and vulgarisms, which the limits of our publication prevent us from noticing at present. But we shall not fail to take a future opportunity of animadverting upon them, as they surpass in enormity the errors which we pointed out in Mrs. INCHBALD's productions.

The part of *Louisa* was undertaken at a very short notice by Miss MURRAY. Making allowance for this young lady's timidity, she acquitted herself with feeling, and a degree of simplicity, which must ever command the approbation of those who are capable of deriving pleasure from unsophisticated nature.

Mr. MURRAY personated *Stockwell* in a masterly style. Indeed it is a work of *supererogation* to enlarge on the merits of this excellent performer, whenever he appears in a character, which admits of a display of his talents.

Mr. LEWIS was, in the aggregate, too eccentric, even for the volatile *Belcour*. But we must do him the justice to observe, that occasionally (and especially in the speech he makes to *Stockwell*: How could you tempt me so? &c.) he evinced a degree of sensibility and feeling, which we little expected to witness in his performance.

Mr. JOHNSTONE, as Major *O'Flaherty*, took the liberty of *improving* upon the author, by giving a variety of *New Readings*; which, though they commanded the applause of the *galleries*, we cannot refrain from condemning, as we conceive an author's reputation too sacred to lie at the mercy of every actor, that conceits himself capable of mending his dialogue.

The play was succeeded by the *chaste* entertainment of *Peeping Tom*, in which Mr. BANNISTER, of Drury Lane, performed the principal character, in consequence of Mr. FAWCETT's indisposition. The Royal Family visited the Theatre this evening.

† Thursday being the Anniversary of King *Charles's* Martyrdom, the Theatres were shut.

†† The Review of *The German Theatre* will *positively* appear in our next.

††† We have received a very polite letter, signed THOMAS BOOTY, pointing out an omission in page 28 of the First Number. We beg leave to apprise this Gentleman, and through him the Readers of THE DRAMATIC CENSOR at large, that only *one* word is wanting to complete the sentence. The passage should have run thus: "Young KEMBLE is a diligent performer, but wants *judgment*."

With respect to the inferior quality of the Paper of the Second Number, the Editor begs leave to observe, that this circumstance originated entirely in a mistake, on the part of the person commissioned to attend to this particular. In consequence of this mistake, subsequent arrangements have been made, which will secure proper attention to neatness and uniformity.